

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**U.S./NORTH KOREAN NEGOTIATORS  
AGREE TO REMAINS RECOVERY OPERATIONS**

U.S. and North Korean negotiators have reached an agreement in which teams in 1999 will jointly recover the remains of Americans missing in action from the Korean War.

This will be the fourth consecutive year that the United States has conducted remains recovery operations in North Korea.

The agreement, following four days of negotiations in New York City led by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, expands similar operations that have been conducted since 1996.

"We've hammered out an agreement that takes us far beyond our three previous years' operations," said Bob Jones, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs. "We formalized the concept of a joint investigation team to locate and interview witnesses to accelerate the pace of recovery, long before our excavation teams begin their work. This concept gives us the potential to recover more remains by using our people more efficiently," he added.

The two sides agreed on an expanded schedule of six joint operations between April and November. Operations will begin in Kujiang and Unsan, where joint teams have previously operated, with the potential to move to other areas later in the year as circumstances warrant. Exact site locations will be finalized in technical meetings in February.

During the past three years, through U.S.-North Korean agreements, joint teams have recovered the remains of 29 soldiers. One has been identified by the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii. Forensic examinations are underway for all the recovered remains. Identifications of additional soldiers are expected within a few months.

The agreement also included two joint archival reviews, in which U.S. archivists are granted access to documents relating to U.S. personnel lost or captured during the war. U.S. researchers conducted an archival review in museums and records collections in North Korea during 1997 and 1998.

The U.S. negotiators also continued to press to establish a mechanism for investigating reports of live Americans living in North Korea and to interview American defectors in North Korea.